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14 July 1967

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

**SUBJECT :** Sanitization and Decontrol of Satellite Photography

**REFERENCES :**

- a) Your Memo of 7 July 1967, Same Subject
- b) Memorandum from Deputy Director, DIA of 7 July 1967, Same Subject
- c) Memorandum for USIB of 23 May 1967, Same Subject (USIB-D-41.12/28)
- d) [redacted] Memo of 11 July 1967, Same Subject
- e) Memorandum to Holders of USIB-D-41.12/25 of 1 May 1967, Same Subject [redacted]

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1. This memorandum is in response to your request of 7 July for comments on the DIA memorandum of the same date. A recommendation is presented in paragraph 12.

2. Before reviewing the bases for the proposed changes to the present method of handling information derived from satellite photography, I find it necessary to clarify some of the implications in the DIA memorandum (Reference b). The proposed changes do not declassify either the fact of the existence of the program, satellite photography as such, any technical data on the systems themselves, the significance of the program, or extent of coverage. The word decontrol does not mean declassify. In the context of this discussion, decontrol means that certain very limited aspects of the satellite program would be taken out of the specially compartmented T-KH system; even these aspects would remain classified as **SECRET** or higher depending on the sensitivity of the information itself.

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3. The primary purpose of the proposed changes is to make readily available to consumers of finished intelligence that information derived from satellite photography which they need for carrying out their duties. Specifically, it is proposed that:

a. The simple fact that the US has a photographic reconnaissance program be taken out of the compartmented T-KH system and be classified SECRET.

b. The substantive intelligence information derived from all satellite photography be used in finished intelligence reporting outside the compartmented T-KH system.

i. The source of the information be given as satellite photography without specifying the type of satellite.

ii. The classification of reporting be based solely on the information content.

iii. No massive program to reclassify existing film or past reporting be undertaken; this material be used in finished intelligence reporting as the need arises.

4. Two of the Director's principal responsibilities are involved in the proposed changes:

a. The production and dissemination of finished intelligence bearing on US policy; and

b. The protection of US intelligence sources and methods.

5. With respect to the first, the Director together with the rest of the intelligence community must keep the policy makers of the US Government and their principal staffs continuously informed about intelligence bearing on policy matters under their jurisdiction. It is often said that anyone who has the need-to-know can be cleared for access to T-KH material; this is true. But, the

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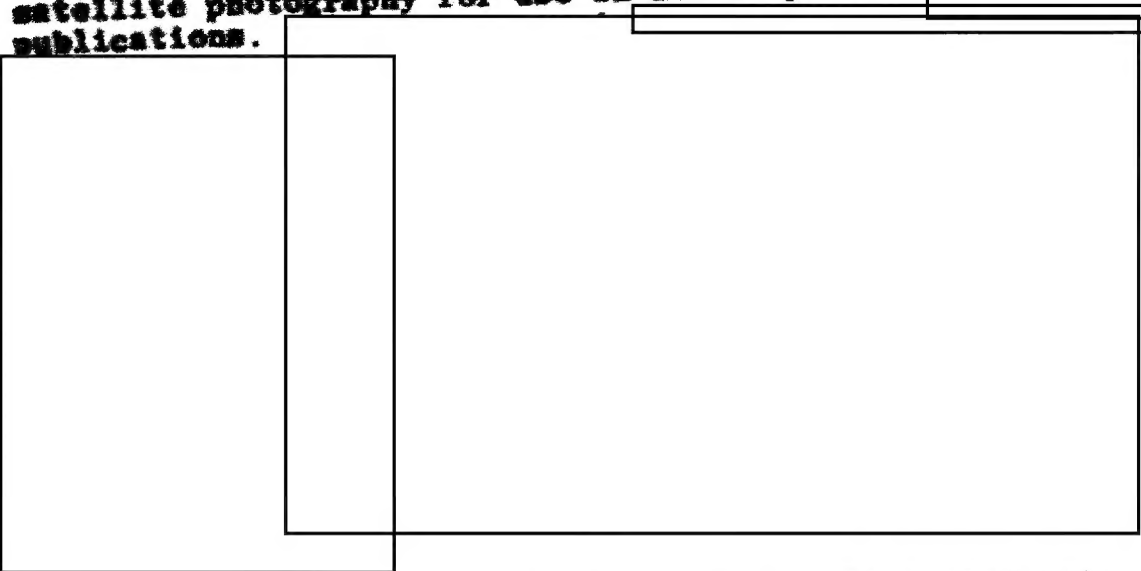
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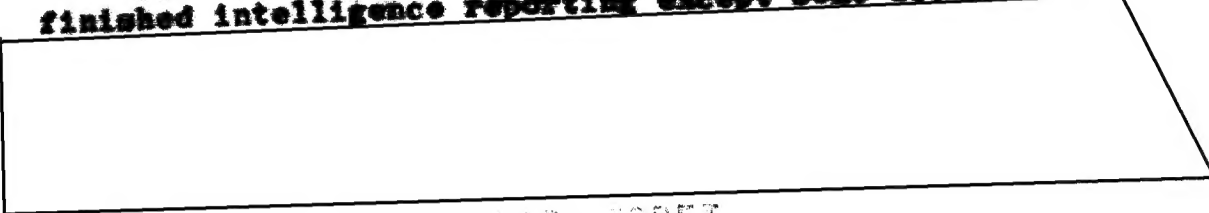
realities of the system are such that in most cases it is extremely inconvenient for those people outside the intelligence community to handle and refer to documents classified at this level. Furthermore, as more people get cleared into the system, the system becomes less a means for limiting the distribution of the information and more a means for inhibiting the use of the information as background for policy decisions.

6. It is also stated that there are procedures available for sanitizing the substantive results of satellite photography for use in non-compartmented publications.



7. Most of these problems could be eliminated and the consumer could be served better if the substantive intelligence information derived from the satellite photography could be taken out of the compartmented T-KN system and used in finished intelligence products, especially current intelligence. Under this arrangement, the classification of the article or paper would be based solely on the information content in accordance with the present definitions of SECRET or TOP SECRET.

8. This approach would be quite workable in most finished intelligence reporting except some detailed



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9. With respect to the Director's responsibility for the protection of intelligence methods and sources, I believe that the COMOR "guidelines" (attached to Reference c) provide adequate protection of the truly sensitive aspects of the US photographic satellite reconnaissance program. In contrast with the views expressed in DIA's and [ ] memoranda, I believe that the prolonged maintenance of the present compartmentation of all aspects of the program will foster an executive decision to eliminate all security controls for this program, even those that are absolutely necessary.

10. In this connection, I feel it necessary to highlight an attitude which is attributed to the intelligence community--that in varying degrees we acquire a proprietary attitude toward intelligence materials and a vested interest in the perpetuation of specially compartmented systems. To the extent it reinforces the security necessary for truly sensitive information, this attitude is very useful. To the extent it persists even when the need for such strict controls has passed, it hampers the dissemination of intelligence to consumers who need the information for policy decisions. The view is growing outside the intelligence community that our handling of satellite photography has reached this stage. Therefore, in order to prevent an obstructionist image, the intelligence community should take those positive steps toward change before the frustration over these controls gets so great as to force an executive decision to eliminate all controls, even those that are absolutely necessary. I believe that the COMOR "guidelines" will go a long way toward avoiding such a reaction.

11. State has noted the security hazard that exists because even the existence of the program is now held within the compartmented T-KH system. Because the press rather freely discusses the matter and especially as a result of the President's public statement about the value of the program, a large and growing number of US officials have become aware of its existence. Those officials without T-KH clearance do not understand what aspects of the program are sensitive and why. If the fact of the program is made **SECRET**, this would permit proper security briefings of these individuals and thereby increase the true protection of this

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important intelligence source. This aspect of the problem was discussed at the April USIB meeting (Reference e) where all members of the Board endorsed the proposal to remove the fact of the program from the T-KH system.

13. On the basis of this discussion, I recommend that you review the memorandum on the USIB discussion on this subject (Reference e) and the COMOR "guidelines" and that we advise the Director to discuss this problem with Secretary McNamara with the objective of obtaining his agreement to go forward with the proposed changes in the handling of information derived from satellite photography.

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Concurred in by DDI: R. J. Smith  
Date 14 JUL 1967

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